

# Bulletin of The Detroit Institute of Arts

Of the City of Detroit

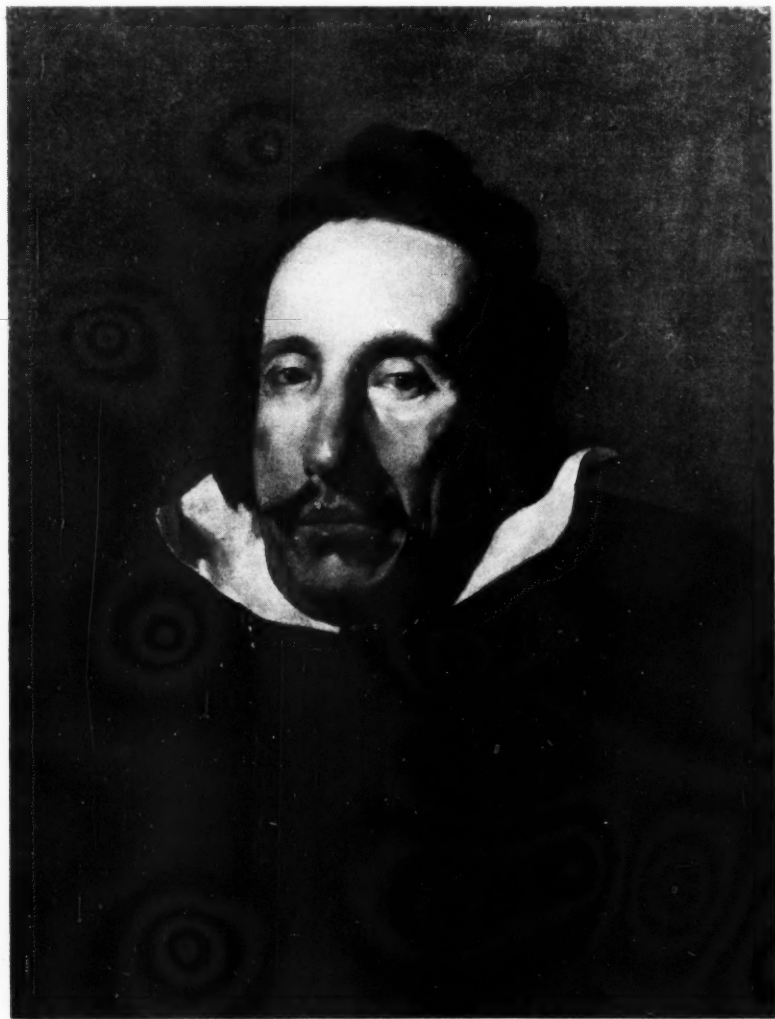
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PORTRAIT OF A MAN  
VELASQUEZ

GIFT OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART FOUNDERS SOCIETY

## PORTRAIT OF A NOBLEMAN—BY DIEGO VELASQUEZ

In no matter what country or century art has reached an unusual height, the number of leaders has always been very small. In no other land has sovereignty in the realm of art lain so entirely in one man's hands as in the art history of Spain, where Velasquez is the one and only all-powerful personality. There are a few other Spanish masters who at one time or another have been placed on the same level with him, Murillo in former generations, or Greco in modern times; and occasionally a position next to Velasquez has been claimed even for Zurbaran or for Goya, although these two, as excellent as their work is at times, are too uneven in their productions to be in serious rivalry with him. Then, too, Greco, certainly a master of extraordinary originality, does not represent the art of Spain at its zenith as does Velasquez, because he was an outsider through his origin (he was born in Greece and studied in Italy) as well as in his manner, which may be called Oriental with as much right as Spanish, as has quite recently been done by one of the leading authorities on Spanish art.

Velasquez, on the other hand, in his personality and in his art stands in the centre of Spanish culture, expressing its greatest originality in a language understood by the whole world, not like Greco's by only a limited number of art lovers of an exceptionally artistic temperament. Born in Seville, the seat of the best Spanish tradition in the field of art and literature, he came to the capital as a young man of twenty-four, to become at once the favorite of the king who, with a rare insight, placed him above all other court painters. Philip IV was at this time only eighteen years of age. The friendship which bound him to his painter became lifelong, one of the rarest and most beauti-

ful friendships that history records between a ruler of the world and a creator of culture. In his style Velasquez, like all great painters, begins by following tradition, but soon breaks with convention and creates something entirely new, which raises him far above his national school, making him a figure to be compared with only a very few in the whole history of art. If the art history of the past is regarded in its relationship to modern art, he assumes a position along with men like Giotto and Leonardo da Vinci, with whom he has in common that his vision began a new age in the art of painting.

Giotto replaced the flat decorative style of the Middle Age with a plastic linear style of great forcefulness. Leonardo first recognized the importance of using the finest nuances of light and shade in the modelling; he knew the changes brought about in the forms through the waves of light passing over them, yet devoted his great art of *chiaroscuro* mainly to the further development of the traditional style of plastic forms. He began to dissolve the transitional lines between light and dark, yet his forms are still clearly outlined and separated from each other as individual plastic objects. While painters up to the time of Raphael and Michelangelo followed the steps of Giotto, Leonardo was followed by Giorgione, Correggio, Titian, and Rembrandt.

With Velasquez begins another, the modern vision. He proved that it is possible to give a sense of reality to pictorial representations even by almost dissolving the appearance of the individual objects through the light surrounding them, by replacing the outlines of objects by broad planes of color, disregarding their plastic form. He proved that to secure the effect of reality no exaggerated light and shadow contrasts

are necessary, that a similar and more natural impression can be procured by developing the figures from a light background instead of from a dark one, by modelling them almost without shadows, by reducing the heavy mass of colour to a thin and fluid medium of light and transparent tones.

With this aim, which became a clear formula only in Velasquez's later works, the artist started a counter-movement against the plastic tendencies begun at the time of Giotto, a counter-movement which was taken up around 1800 by painters like David, by nineteenth century masters like Manet and the Impressionists, and again by some of the most modern artists. At the present day it is leading back to a light and flat decorative style somewhat similar in principle to mediaeval wall painting.

On account of the important position, then, which Velasquez assumes in the development of the history of painting, and for other reasons besides—I refer to the great example which he set the art world through the dignity and nobility of his personality as expressed in his art—it must be the endeavor of every representative collection to have his art represented. To succeed in this endeavor is, however, not an easy task, for his works rarely come into the market, and when they do are seldom within the reach of a public museum. Velasquez was not a prolific artist as were, for instance, Rubens or Van Dyke, or even Titian or Rembrandt; besides this, most of his works were painted for the Spanish court and remained in Madrid. With no other artist can we get as little acquainted outside his native country as with him whose full magnificence will forever be revealed only to the visitor of the Prado.

But with the portrait acquired by the Art Institute, thanks to the generosity and foresight of the Art Founders' Society, we are fortunate to come into the possession of an unquestionable and

remarkable representation of his art which, although it does not belong to his last and greatest period, gives a deep impression of his great ideals soon after his arrival in Madrid.

The portrait most likely represents one of the noblemen of the Spanish court with whom Velasquez may have become acquainted through Olivarez, Philip IV's minister, who was to introduce him to the king. It is an extraordinary piece of characterization. Although only the head and shoulders are shown, we feel the heavy short figure of this dignified courtier whose high position we may imagine from the manner in which he holds his head alone, even if the golden chain around his neck were not visible. The expression of power and disdain in his large features is marvellously rendered by the firmly closed, unevenly-formed lips, the sensitive nostrils, the decided folds of the cheeks and of the energetic chin, sunk in upon his broad chest, and in the deep-set eyes with their penetrating, superior look.

In style the painting is clearly related to the first portraits which Velasquez painted of the king in 1623 and 1624, and to those of the Infante Don Carlos and Olivarez. It still shows the source of the tradition from which Velasquez developed his art, the tradition which in the late sixteenth century came to Spain from Italy through masters like Caravaggio—masters the inspiration of whose style went back as far as Leonardo da Vinci. Their pleasure in "cave light" effects, in strong contrasts of light and shadow, producing exaggerated plastic forms, is still noticeable, although only to a small degree, in the manner in which the face is modelled and lighted against the dark frame of hair and the lighter colour of the background. But how far has Velasquez already departed from the heavy style of these earlier masters! Instead of a dark brown background, the *fond* has become light silver-

gray, the figure—this is more obvious in the original than in the reproduction—is developed in a silvery atmosphere, the shades of dark gray and black, such as those of the hair and the mantle, differ greatly, and the lower part of the head, executed in a masterly fashion, is placed light against light before the white collar. In the technic also we already find the fluid and easy manner of Velasquez's later style, especially in the painting of the cloak, which is executed in a few light and masterly strokes. Everywhere we notice how the artist tries to get away from exaggerated and obvious plastic effects, how he tries to replace a

hard linear style with a soft pictorial manner. We witness the moment when he broke loose from tradition, revealing his new and unheard-of aims, which were to make him the founder of modern painting.

The painting, formerly in the possession of a German diplomat in Madrid (1820), was first published by Dr. A. L. Mayer in the *Pantheon* (Vol. IV, No. 7, p. 334) and has been rightly called by this well-known authority on Spanish art one of the most important works of Velasquez rediscovered in recent times.

—W. R. VALENTINER.

## NEW CHINESE SCULPTURES

During the past few months the Detroit Institute of Arts has been especially fortunate in the acquisition of several outstanding examples of Chinese sculpture. One of the pieces owes its origin to the late sixth or early seventh century, three to the T'ang dynasty (618-906), one to the Yüan dynasty (1280-1368), and one to a still undetermined period.

The first figure mentioned (29.245) is that of a Buddhist divinity identified by analogy with a similar piece in the Metropolitan Museum as Maitreya, the Buddha of the future<sup>1</sup>. It is of bronze, 45¾ inches in height, with the flesh parts fire-gilt and with traces of blue pigment in the hair. It stands with the right hand in the *abhaya* mudra, the gesture of reassurance, and the left in the *vara* mudra, the gesture of charity. A noteworthy characteristic is the robe, which clings to the stocky full-modelled body and falls over the arms, ending above the ankles to display two undergarments. It covers the breast and both arms and shoulders, and the highly stylized folds

are represented by ridges which have no organic relation to any presumptive fabric they symbolize, and little to the bronze figure they adorn. Standing figures of this type with this characteristic garment are known as Udayana or "sandalwood" images. The legend has it that while Buddha was temporarily absent from earth preaching in the heavens, King Udayana caused a portrait of him to be made, and this legendary portrait has been regarded traditionally as the prototype of this class of images. Examples are found in caves in Bamiyan in northwest India, from the third century; in Mathura in pre-Gupta India, of the fourth century; in the Yün-kang caves in northern China, of the fifth century; in a ninth century wooden image in Seiryō Temple in Kyoto; and in eighteenth century Tibetan pieces. A special sub-group, related to seated figures with robe of the Udayana type, and to some other Chinese statues, is characterized by having the ridge-folds bisected or trisected longitudinally, and these ridges on the upper arm end-

1. L. Adam, *Der Cicerone*, Vol. XX, 1928, pp. 167-170.  
*The Art News*, March 9, 1929, pp. 1, 4.  
 J. Hackin, *Eastern Art*, 1928, No. 2, pp. 109-116.  
 A. Salmony, *Eastern Art*, 1929, No. 4, pp. 224-230.



MAITREYA, BUDDHA OF THE FUTURE  
29.245 CHINESE BRONZE, VII CENTURY

ing in definite forks. Most of the specimens of this type that can be cited with some assurance as to date and provenance are derived from Shensi or northern Shansi and date from the fifth to the end of the sixth century. Both the Metropolitan figure, which bears an inscription

describing the figure as Maitreya and dating it 486 C. E., and the Detroit statue, belong to this special group, concerning which a detailed study is now ready for publication. The advanced stylization of the garments of the Detroit Maitreya, the increased realism of the body, and the handling of the face suggest that its period approaches the T'ang dynasty; and we date it, therefore, as the last of the special group we have mentioned, possibly in the first few years of the seventh century. Whatever its period, it is clear that the statue was modelled by a vigorous hand that endowed it with a peculiarly stern and masculine dignity informed by a real humanistic spirit.

The pottery figurines made in the T'ang dynasty for deposit in tombs have attracted much attention of late years by reason of their grace and charm as well as of their spirited realism. Three exceptionally good examples are among our new accessions. One (29.163) is an equestrienne, perhaps a trick or circus rider, dismounting. The mount is reined back upon his haunches, his head pulled slightly to the left, with his left foreleg off the ground. His head shows real temper and an effort to resist the strain of the bit. The rider has both arms extended in the task of controlling her horse, and her right leg is thrown back over the croup. The group is 14½ inches in height and is made of unglazed buff pottery. Enough color remains to inform us that the whole was covered with a white slip on which the dappling and harness of the horse were painted in black, as well as the marks indicating that the saddle covering was of fur. The rider had a red skirt, green upper garment and boots or leg coverings, and black hair. The energy and restrained movement of this group is well contrasted with the simple dignity and charm of two slender court ladies which Dr. Valentiner acquired in

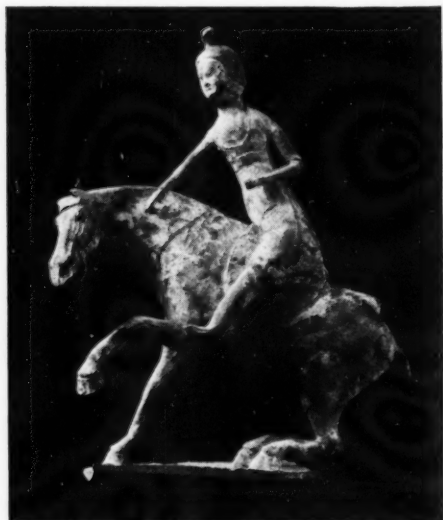


COURT LADY  
29.342 MORTUARY POTTERY, T'ANG DYNASTY

Europe this summer. One (29.341) stands 16 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches high and has a turban headdress, and the other (29.342) is 16 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches and has an elaborate phoenix crown. The bodies of both, which are practically identical and evidently mould-made, are covered with a well-preserved glaze mottled with green and brown. The very different heads, which in their form and varying set on the shoulders give totally different characters to the

two figures, are unglazed and painted. The delicate sketching of the features and the bloom on the cheeks have endured remarkably well through the centuries.

Turning back to Buddhist sculpture we have to consider a small lacquered wood image of Shakyamuni as an ascetic (29.172). During six years of his life before he attained enlightenment the Buddha experimented with the practice of bodily asceticism, and it is this period that is represented in the present figure. The statuette is only 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height. The flesh has been lacquered gold and the robe red; traces of blue pigment are to be seen in the hair. The lacquer of the robe is engraved in a textile pattern and the conventional patches of the mendicant's garment are represented. The hands are clasped over the upraised left knee and the right leg is tucked under the seated body. The face is bearded and is Aryan rather than Chinese in character. Although the head is bowed in meditation there is an expression of sweetly solemn repose in it that suggests



EQUESTRIENNE DISMOUNTING  
29.163 MORTUARY POTTERY, T'ANG DYNASTY

a hidden knowledge of vast secrets. About the whole figure there is an air strongly reminiscent of the Gothic.

Statues of this sort are relatively rare, but there are two other distinguished examples in the University Museum in Philadelphia and the Royal Ontario Mu-

seum of Archaeology in Toronto. Sirén has reproduced and discussed both of these<sup>2</sup> and attributed them with cogent argument to the Yüan dynasty. They reveal a concern with the humanity rather than the spirituality or divinity of

the Buddha and have a realism that in earlier times was found in Buddhism only in such figures as those of the Guardian Kings or Lokopala. The broad empire of the Mongols, their religious tolerance and cosmopolitan court, make it possible for us to readily under-



SHAKYAMUNI AS AN ASCETIC  
29.172 CHINESE LACQUERED WOOD, YUAN DYNASTY

stand the non-hieratic pose and the non-Chinese faces of these images made at this time. Further there is an evident kinship between our image and the well-known and frequently reproduced<sup>3</sup> thirteenth century picture by Liang K'ai, in

seum of Archaeology in Toronto. Sirén has reproduced and discussed both of these<sup>2</sup> and attributed them with cogent argument to the Yüan dynasty. They reveal a concern with the humanity rather than the spirituality or divinity of

2. O. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, Pl. 620.

O. Sirén, *Ostasiatischen Zeitschrift*, Jahr XIV, Heft 1-2.

3. See *Kokka*, No. 227.

Tokyo. In that painting the robe is also red and the arms and head bear a striking resemblance to those of our figure. It would not seem amiss if we assigned our hermit to the Yüan period also.

Finally we have a mask, almost certainly a portrait, made of very thin copper and partially covered with a rich

istics of flatness, remarkable foreshortening, and eyebrows of short tooled strokes, have been published. R. R. Tatlock illustrated<sup>4</sup> the mask from Mr. G. del Drago's collection, describing it as a professed mystery. H. d'Ardenne de Tizac published<sup>5</sup> the fragmentary mask from the collection of M. Jean Sauphar,



29.273 COPPER PORTRAIT MASK

green patina. It measures  $8\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height by  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches in width, and is only one inch in total depth. The copper is less than  $1/16$  of an inch in thickness and appears to have been cast rather than beaten. The only tool marks are the short strokes of the eyebrows. The subtle modelling of eyes, cheeks, mouth and chin is unsurpassed, and the foreshortening is amazing. Two other similar masks, both either broken or fragmentary but showing the same character-

calling it pre-Han (before 206 B.C.). One distinguished scholar suggested that the apparently long ears of the Detroit specimen might be due to Buddhistic influence and that the mask might thus be T'ang, but measurement shows that the ears are hardly unnatural in length. Further a gilt-bronze mask of the Perzynski collection, exhibited in Berlin in 1929<sup>6</sup>, shows a more oval face, deeper relief and a very different handling of such details as the eyebrows. A silver mask

4. *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. XLVII, pp. 162-163.

5. *Artibus Asiae*, 1926, No. 3, pp. 171.

6. Catalogue No. 315.

seen in New York and attributed to Tang is much closer to the Perzynski piece than to the other three. There is a certain resemblance between the square-jawed masculine countenances of the three low-relief masks and the bas-reliefs of Han which must be overlooked. The uses of the masks are uncertain. They are certainly not life or death masks, though very individual in character. Their flatness and lack of purposeful perforation of the eyes seems to rule out any conjecture as to a theatrical origin. Most likely they served some mortuary function not yet clear. Whatever we

shall find out about them it is obvious that the splendid, perfectly preserved work in the Detroit collection is a treasure.

As scientific students interested in extending and clarifying our knowledge of Chinese sculpture these questions of historic styles and dates are pertinent and important, but, after all, our primary concern in the Detroit Institute of Arts is with the aesthetic quality of the things we purchase and exhibit, and there can be no slightest doubt that each of these six pieces is a work of authentic artistry of a high order.

BENJAMIN MARCH.

## SOME EARLY ITALIAN PAINTINGS

To the museum's collection of early Italian paintings, already quite considerable in view of the few years in which it has been gathered, have recently been added several more characteristic and attractive pieces. They are all from the Gothic period proper, i. e., from the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century, and representative of the two then leading schools of painting in Italy, those of Siena and of Florence. Not only did the political life of the period focus in these two rival cities, the headquarters of the two mighty parties of the Ghibellines and the Guelphs, which were struggling fiercely at that time for dominance, but Siena and Florence were also the two centers of art in the peninsula, while Rome and Venice, who held the crown in the sixteenth century, were still in their "dark age." Rome, especially, because of the absence of the popes, who for the greater part of the fourteenth century resided in Avignon, had sunk to mere provincial importance. Venice, though politically rising gradually to the zenith, was artistically still greatly dependent on the rigid models set by Byzantium. We thus find the progressive Florentine and Siennese painters and other artists working all over Italy and even beyond the

frontiers of the country in Avignon.

The very fact of this wide extent of the respective spheres of Siennese and



CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS  
SCHOOL OF SIENA, XIV CENTURY

Florentine art, with artists working in different places, changing to some extent their styles under the influences of a new atmosphere and leaving behind local artistic colonies trained under their guidance, makes it in many cases rather hard to attribute certain works to certain painters known by name or well-established as artistic personalities. In the

*His Cross*, is decidedly Sienese, while the other two panels representing the Virgin and the Angel of the Annunciation are, with equal certainty, Florentine.

The earliest work seems to be the impressive *Christ Bearing His Cross*. The panel has been tentatively assigned to the school of Barna da Siena, the most important of the followers of the great



THE ANNUNCIATION  
SCHOOL OF FLORENCE, ABOUT 1400

case of our newly-acquired works we have so far been able to ascribe only one painting to a definite master, the *Christ in Benediction*, which, without doubt, is by the hand of Andrea di Bartolo, whose charming Madonna came into the collection a few years ago. As to the other pieces, we can at least state with confidence that one, the *Christ Bearing*

Simone Martini. His main achievement is the series of frescoes he did soon after the middle of the fourteenth century in the Collegiata Church of S. Gimignano. Vasari relates that Barna died during his work there, from a fall off a scaffold, and gives as the date of his death the year 1381. Stylistically, however, the murals appear to be consider-

ably earlier, and since, moreover, we have documentary evidence that the rest of the frescoes in the Collegiata were done by Bartolo di Fredi about 1360-65, it is almost certain that Barna's work was done shortly before that time. There is, indeed, a certain similarity between our picture and the same representation by Barna in his frescoes and in a panel attributed to him in the Frick collection in New York. There is, however, no doubt that Barna himself was not its master. The heavier proportions of the figure, as well as the increased naturalism in rendering the details, especially the hands and the bagging folds of the garments, indicate a date not far from the turn of the century. The master, certainly a Sienese, might eventually be found in the neighborhood of Taddeo di Bartolo.

The charming *Annunciation*, on two panels which, as is shown by their thickness, were originally parts of a large polyptychal altarpiece, probably forming the tops of two corresponding wings, is certainly a Florentine work of the time around 1400. As to the master, he is to be looked for among painters like Niccolo di Pietro Gerini and Lorenzo di Bicci who, with their anonymous followers, were the last offspring of the glorious school of Giotto, the great innovator from the earlier part of the fourteenth century, at a time when the first representatives of the new Renaissance movement, which was to sweep all over Europe, had already begun their activity. These last "Gothics" were by no means geniuses but nevertheless true artists who, with solid craftsmanship and refined taste, cultivated the formative ideals handed down to them by their forebears in art. The fact that they were not "modern" does not—just as little as with artists of today—necessarily imply that they were not good. Our *Annunciation*, with the gracefully sweeping lines of its composition, the delicate

faces of the two figures and its bright and luminous colors set against a glimmering gold background, is a good example of the art of these men who carefully nursed the fading flower of the Middle Ages. Its master shows indirectly the influence of Orcagna and rather clearly his relationship to Pietro di Nic-



CHRIST IN BENEDICTION  
ANDREA DI BARTOLO

colo Gerini. He is, perhaps, identical with Niccolo's unknown follower who did the altarpiece of *The Holy Trinity Between Saints* in the Vatican Gallery in Rome.

Andrea di Bartolo, who painted the *Christ in Benediction*, also belongs to this last generation of purely Gothic painters. He is the son of the above-mentioned Bartolo di Fredi who, as a young man, did the frescoes with scenes from the Old Testament in the Collegiata in S. Gimignano. Andrea is first mentioned as his father's assistant in 1389.

As an artistic personality he was not very strong. While he first followed very closely in his father's footsteps, he came, after Bartolo's death, entirely under the influence of Taddeo di Bartolo, the prolific master who was a conspicuous figure among Sienese painters during the years around the turn of the century. Andrea died in 1428. The noble figure of Christ which the museum ac-

quired seems also to have originally formed the terminal, probably the center, of a polyptych. The attribution to the master is based upon its striking similarities to signed or otherwise authenticated works by him. Since Taddeo di Bartolo's influence is quite marked, the picture must be dated in the late period of Andrea's career (about 1410).

—WALTER HEIL.

## FOUR EGYPTO-ISLAMIC CARVED PANELS

Among the Institute's recent acquisitions are four especially interesting and important wooden door-panels of Egypto-Islamic origin. Because of their easy destructibility only a few specimens of the early Islamic wood-carvings have been preserved and for that reason they have not found due appreciation nor detailed consideration in art literature.

In ancient times Egypt was one of the main countries of the Near East where wood-carving presents an independent development. From the remaining specimens created in the Islamic age of Egypt we are enabled to trace this development almost step by step; and the earliest Islamic wood-carvings reveal a close relationship to those of the pre-Islamic Coptic epoch stylistically as well as technically. It was not before the ninth century, during the emirate of the Tulunids, a dynasty of Turkish descent ruling in Egypt from 808-905 A. D. independently of the Abbasid Khaliphath, that the so-called Abbasid imperial style, which had been developed



CARVED WOOD PANEL

FIG. 1. EGYPTIAN, TULUNIDE, IX-X CENTURY

in Samarra, was introduced. From this period of style comes one of our four panels, showing a workmanship and ornamentation entirely different from that of the early Egyptian wood-carvings. (Fig. 1).

The geometrical "slanting cut" style, which is represented by our specimen (unfortunately only one-half of the original piece is preserved, measuring 4" x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ " ) was itself an innovation in the decorative art as developed in



CARVED WOOD PANEL

FIGURE 2 EGYPTIAN, FATIMIDE, X-XI CENTURY

Samarra. There can be no doubt, after the comprehensive investigations of J. Strzygowski in his book *Altai-Iran und Völkerwanderung* (Leipzig, 1917) that this decorative principle, which is so entirely foreign to the Arabic spirit, was brought by the Turks from their Central-Asiatic mother country to Mesopotamia, when they formed the main body of the Abbasid imperial guard. After all, the new capital, Samarra, was founded by the Turks in 836 A.D. I need not dis-

tectural ornaments (viz. Mosque Ibn Tulun) but also the decoration of wooden furniture consist mostly of these geometrical-abstract palmette patterns in the "slanting-cut" style.

We have a good example of this style in our door-panel (Fig. 1). The ornament consists of geometric full and split palmettes in symmetrical arrangement. The whole system appears to have had a further continuation upward which, however, is missing in our fragment.



CARVED WOOD PANEL  
FIGURE 3 EGYPTIAN, FATIMIDE, XII CENTURY

cuss the specimens of pre-Islamic-Turkish art and shall content myself with referring to the afore-mentioned book of J. Strzygowski.

The main characteristic of the "slanting-cut" style is the combination of the relief ground with the lines of the ornament, resulting in carved figures of triangular cross-section. The patterns consist of geometrical palmette scrolls in manifold variations which, by their abstract stroke of line and formation of facets, are characteristic of the spirit of Turkish art. Ahmed Ibn Tulun, the founder of the Tulunid dynasty (who ruled until 884 A.D.) brought, as has been said before, this Central Asiatic Turkish style to Old-Cairo, whence it spread widely, vigorously and lastingly. During this period not only the archi-

Several wood-carvings with similar "slanting-cut" patterns, dating from the ninth and tenth century, are owned by the Islamic Department of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin and the National Museum of Arab Art in Cairo.

A different character of style is represented by the Institute's second door panel (Fig. 2). It measures 4 1/16" x 8". The ornamentation has here already become more mobile and unconstrained but still shows, which is very important, the "slanting cut" technique, now, however, more deeply incised. The palmette tendrils which have been arranged in perfect symmetry at both sides of a full-palmette are enlivened by a light pinnation (done in a schematic manner) and this method results in an artistic value different from the style

heretofore considered. This feature had already penetrated the abstract-geometrical conception in Samarra and came to complete dominance in the eleventh and following centuries. The palmette-shaped pattern of purely geometrical conception, which we have seen in Fig. 1, assumed the form of a plant-like ornament which became the foundation for the so-called "arabesque." This most interesting feature is now particularly manifest in the specimen here considered.

possibility in widening the scope of his artistic activity. A number of wood-carvings have been preserved which show this new style in all its forms and which are very important from the study of the historical development.

Our piece (Fig. 3), measuring  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8", shows the very popular motive of two gazelles with the tree of life between them. The heads of the animals are, as in practically all similar representations, shown in an erect attitude and the feet



CARVED WOOD PANEL  
FIGURE 4 EGYPTIAN, FATIMIDE, XII CENTURY

The palmettes have become smaller and in their pinnations show a closer resemblance to plant-leaves; the interlacing is no longer fully worked out but very faintly suggested and, above all, the whole composition has become more schematic. In keeping with these features our door panel belongs to the time of the transition from the style of the Tulunids to that of the Fatimids and dates, therefore, most likely from the tenth or eleventh century.

Not less than a century later the wood carvings in Egypt came to an extraordinarily comprehensive development under the Fatimid Khalifs (969-1171 A.D.). In addition to the arabesque work there now appears the representation of men and animals in fullest development of pure decorative form. The enrichment of the ornamentation used in wood-carving through the portrayal of living beings gave the artist an undreamt-of

appear in an advancing position. Regarded from the stylistic standpoint our piece is much later than its somewhat smaller pendant in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

The fundamental difference between our door panels (Figs. 1 and 2) and this piece consists further in the fact that here the "slanting cut" technique has been completely lost and the ornament rests on the flat ground, a characteristic feature of Fatimid wood-carving. The border is formed of a repetition of the Arabian sentence: "el-mulk-i-allah" "The domination of the Lord" made up of a band of Kufic inscription which appears in the same epigraphic form on several Fatimid ornamental wall-panels.

The fourth ornamental panel, measuring  $3\frac{13}{16}$ " x  $10\frac{1}{8}$ ", is not a door-panel but part of a piece of furniture or architecture of a profane character. This is proved by its shape, not in one plane like

the other three pieces, but with a slightly curved profile. This piece also lacks the dovetail ends which the others possess, but it has four holes on the borders destined for wooden pins. The ornamentation of this panel shows an entirely different style and consists of figural representations without tendrils and arabesques. In relief on flat ground two human figures are shown in a sitting position with flasks and cups in their hands, flanked by two birds, obviously a drinking scene, of which there exist sev-

eral parallels in Fatimid wood carving of Egypt and in Islamic art in general.

The decorative composition, the "theatrical" expression of the figures and the manner of execution of the forms represented and, above all, the absence of accessories, tendrils and arabesques, bespeak a late period for its execution, the thirteenth century, at which time the mature Fatimid art of wood-carving with fully developed figural motives of representation was gradually replaced by other styles.

M. AGA-OGLU.

## MUSEUM NOTES

A PAMPHLET, "LECTURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS," containing a full list of this year's educational opportunities, may be had at the Information Desk.

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THE FIRST OF SIX TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES on art will be given on Tuesday evening, November 12th, by Henry Turner Bailey, Director of the Cleveland School of Art. This magnetic speaker will use as his theme "The Importance of Barbarian Invasions."

A SECOND TUESDAY EVENING LECTURE falls also within the month of November on Tuesday evening, November 26th, when Mr. Benjamin March, Curator of Asiatic Art, will speak on "Life's Movement: the Spirit of Chinese Art," his lecture having particular reference to the Loan Exhibition of Chinese Art which will be in the galleries at that time.

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MR. FRANK BISHOP, CURATOR OF MUSIC will give his second of a series of eight lectures on Tuesday evening, November 5th, on the "Evolution of Harmony and Counterpoint," and on November 19th will give his second concert, "Bach and his Contemporaries."

THE ORGAN RECITALS so successfully inaugurated and carried on during the past two years by Dr. Francis L. York, Honorary Curator of Music, will be resumed on Friday evening, November 8th, at 8:15 o'clock. During the season a number of guest organists from Detroit and other cities will be heard in these recitals. Dr. York will give the first program, a lecture on the history and development of the pipe organ, illustrated with appropriate musical themes, to show the range and resources of the organ.

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MISS MARION LELAND has been appointed to the position of Museum Instructor left vacant by the resignation of Miss Helen W. Harvey. Miss Leland comes through the appointment of the Civil Service Commission, being the successful candidate among a large number of applicants who took the examination for this position. After completing her high school studies in Chicago, Miss Leland attended Wellesley College for a year and a half before entering the University of Michigan from which she graduated in 1927, after majoring in the arts, with a degree of A. B.

# CALENDAR OF LECTURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON TALKS

LECTURE HALL AT 3:30 P. M.

November 3, 3:30 P. M. "Journeys Afield with Some American Painters" by Ralph Morris, Educational Secretary.

November 10, 3:30 P. M. "The American Print Makers' Exhibition" by Miss Isabel Weadock, Curator of Prints.

November 17, 3:30 P. M. "The Institute's New Luca della Robbia" by Miss Josephine Walther, Associate Curator of American Art.

November 24, 3:30 P. M. "The Loan Exhibition of Chinese Art" by Ralph Morris, Educational Secretary.

Incidental Music by The Chamber Music Society.

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## TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES AND MUSICALES.

AUDITORIUM AT 8:15 P. M.

November 5, 8:15 P. M. "The Evolution of Harmony and Counterpoint." Lecture by Frank Bishop, Curator of Music.

November 12, 8:15 P. M. "The Importance of Barbarian Invasions," Henry Turner Bailey, Director Cleveland School of Art.

November 19, 8:15 P. M. "Bach and His Contemporaries." Concert by Frank Bishop, Curator of Music.

November 26, 8:15 P. M. "Life's Movement: the Spirit of Chinese Art." Benjamin March, Curator of Asiatic Art.

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## FRIDAY EVENING ORGAN RECITALS

AUDITORIUM AT 8:15 P. M.

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### MARIONETTE PLAY

Lecture Hall, Friday Evening, November 1, at 8:15 P. M.

For the Members of The Founders' Society

"The Tragedy of Tragedies or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great."

Designed and presented by Paul McPharlin.

## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Loan Exhibition of Dutch Painting of the XVII Century, October 16-November 10.

The American Print Makers' Exhibition, October 16-November 15.

Exhibition of Portraits by Leopold Seyffert, N. A., October 16-November 10.

Loan Exhibition of Chinese Art, November 19-December 12.

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